The Buddhist "Monastery" and the Indian Garden: Aesthetics, Assimilations, and the Siting of Monastic Establishments

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—Für Oskar von Hinüber als kleines Zeichen eines grossen Dankes—

The vocabulary we use to refer to early Buddhist establishments in India could hardly be more different from the vocabulary that early Buddhist authors or compilers used to refer to the same places,[1] nor could two lexicons be farther apart in their associations. We call such places "monasteries" or "cloisters" and—willingly or not—invoke a vision of an isolated, chaste, serene, ascetic, and austere space.[2] Buddhist monks, however, in both texts and inscriptions called such places *vihāras* or *ārāmas*, and these Sanskrit terms, or their Prakrit equivalents, would have had very different associations. In Classical Sanskrit the term *vihāra* would have meant, and continued to mean, "walking or touring for pleasure"—this is the only sense in which Aśoka uses the term[3]—or "sport, play, pastime, or diversion," or "a place of recreation, pleasure-ground." *Ārāma* too would have referred to "delight, pleasure," or a "place of pleasure, a garden,"[4] and for an urban population of any standing or sophistication in classical India both terms would have been associated with gardens lush with flowers and fruit trees in bloom, filled with bird-song and the cries of peacocks and the sound of bees, all invoking a strong aesthetic eroticism—an *ārāma* or *vihāra* or *udyāna* was where well-heeled men went to dally with lovely ladies, or where urban ladies went to amuse themselves and take in the scenery. Scenes of such occur repeatedly in Classical Sanskrit drama and "court" poetry where the garden and its beauties are constantly extolled and intertwined with aesthetic and erotic pleasure.[5]

1. "Early" here and throughout is an elastic term. In the archeological record "early" Buddhist "monasteries" are relatively late, not appearing clearly until the beginning of the Common Era. Since texts as we have them already know the kind of fully developed *vihāra* that appears in the archeological record only then, the texts apparently cannot be any earlier; see G. Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters: Still More Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu, 2004), 73–80.

2. As one of a very large number of possible examples, see P. Fergusson, *Architecture of Solitude: Cistercian Abbeys in Twelfth-Century England* (Princeton, 1984), noting in particular its title; or the photographic evocation in the more popular S. Tobin, *The Cistercians: Monks and Monasteries of Europe* (Woodstock, NY, 1995).

3. Schopen, *Buddhist Monks*, 76; see also H. Falk, "The Preamble at Pāṅgurāriā," in *Bauddhavidyāsudhākaraḥ: Studies in Honour of Heinz Bechert on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (Indica et Tibetica, vol. 30), ed. P. Kieffer-Pülz and J.-U. Hartmann (Swisttal-Odendorf, 1997), 106–21, esp. 118–19.

4. For the senses of both *vihāra* and *ārāma*, see M. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford, 1899) but almost any Sanskrit dictionary will produce the same.

5. On all of this see the recent and long overdue study of the early Indian garden in D. Ali, "Gardens in Early Indian Court Life," *Studies in History*, n.s. 19.2 (2003): 221–52, which will be referred to frequently below. On the profusion of interchangeable terms used to refer to the garden, see especially 224, where *ārāma* is highlighted but *vihāra* is not, in part, perhaps, because there is a tendency to see a Buddhist meaning in the term where it may not have one. In the *Mṛcchakaṭika* (Act IX, Vs. 30+), for example, the hero Cārudatta, a brahmin, is praised for having adorned the city with *tāvatpurasthāpana-v ihārārāma-devālaya-taḍāgakūpayūpa*. Kale translates this as "founding suburbs, and . . . monasteries, gardens, temples, tanks, wells, and sacrificial posts" (M. R. Kale, *The Mṛichchhakaṭika*

At first sight, of course, the vocabulary of our Buddhist monks is at least a little startling, but their use of the language of the Indian garden is not limited to the terms *vihāra* or *ārāma*. A number of Buddhist inscriptions, for example, refer to *maṇḍapas* as components or constructions at monastic sites,[6] and although this term is usually translated as a "hall" or "pillared hall," Daud Ali—in the first serious discussion of gardens in early India—has noted that

> By far, the most prominent architectural structures in gardens were bowers (*maṇḍapa nikuñja*), which could either take the form of a clump of trees which formed a sort of enclosure, or just as typically, were fashioned by arranging vines and other creeping plants around the structure of a roofed pavilion (*maṇḍapa*).[7]

He also notes that the function of these "bowers" or *maṇḍapas* was to provide shade, but that they were also "places of shelter and rest from the games and pursuits of the garden . . . places of seclusion—places where lovers could conduct their amorous liaisons in secrecy" (p. 232). The presence of "architectural structures" and Ali's remarks, moreover, should suggest what both Buddhist and non-Buddhist literary sources make clear: the early Indian garden, while full of flowers, flowering and fruit trees, and flocks of all sorts of birds, was not a natural space, but a constructed and cultivated one, one that was carefully tended by gardeners, and such gardeners were commonly called—in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist literary sources—*ārāmikas*. But *ārāmika* is yet another term from the lexicon of the garden that is shared with Buddhist monastic sources: Buddhist monastic codes regularly call a category of lay menial workers who do the manual labor of the "monastery" *ārāmikas*.[8] The work-force and attendants of pleasure groves and Buddhist "monasteries" are, then, called the same thing in classical India.

Whether it will ever be possible to establish a clear chronological priority between the lexicon of the garden and the Buddhist monastic lexicon remains doubtful and, in any case, to be seen, and even if it could be done the more important thing is that there is no doubt at all that both lexicons were being deployed and were simultaneously circulating in the early centuries of the Common Era, and that is the period of interest here. This is clear, for example, from two plays attributed to Śūdraka—whatever their *precise* dates[9]—which reflect

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of Śūdraka [Poona, 1924], 340.7 and 341); Ryder as "with mansions, cloisters, parks, temples, pools, and fountains" (A. W. Ryder, *The Little Clay Cart* [Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 9] [Cambridge, Mass., 1905], 148). But here, and in a number of similar passages in Sanskrit literature, there is no good reason for thinking that the term *vihāra* refers to "a (Buddhist) monastery" or "cloister," and it is probably better taken as "place of recreation, pleasure-ground."

6. See J. Ph. Vogel, "Prakrit Inscriptions from a Buddhist Site at Nagarjunikonda," *Epigraphia Indica* 20 (1929–30): 22; P. R. Srinivasan, "Some Brahmi Inscriptions from Guntupalli," *Epigraphia Indica* 39 (1973): 250; J. Burgess, *Report on the Elura Cave Temples and Brahmanical and Jaina Caves in Western India* (Archaeological Survey of Western India, vol. 5) (London, 1883), 81–82 (from Kanheri); etc.

7. Ali, "Gardens," 232. Note that Ali's focus is on "palace and city-household gardens," but the features discussed here and below would appear to be common to all types.

8. For just one example of *ārāmika* being used in the non-Buddhist sense in Buddhist literature, see *Cīvaravastu*, GMs iii 2, 16.2 (for abbreviations used in textual citations see the list in Schopen, *Buddhist Monks*). For the more specifically Buddhist use of the term, see most recently N. Yamagiwa, "*Ārāmika*—Gardener or Park Keeper? One of the Marginals around the Buddhist *Saṃgha*," in *Buddhist and Indian Studies in Honour of Professor Sodo Mori* (Hamamatsu, 2002), 363–85.

9. For two representative discussions of the problems of date and authorship, see G. H. Schokker, *The Pādatāḍitaka of Śyāmilaka*, part 1 (Indo-Iranian Monograph, vol. 9) (The Hague, 1966), 27–31; A. K. Warder, *Indian Kāvya Literature*, vol. 3: *The Early Medieval Period (Śūdraka to Viśākhadatta)*, 2nd rev. ed. (Delhi, 1990), 1–45. For the elephant incident, see J. A. B. van Buitenen, "The Elephant Scene of the *Mṛcchakaṭika*, Act Two," *JAOS* 83 (1963):

both a fully developed conception of the Indian garden and its aesthetic and erotic associations, together with a sophisticated knowledge of Buddhist monastic practice and its literature. In Act VIII of the *Mṛcchakaṭika*, for example, the Buddhist *bhikṣu* who revives the unconscious heroine tells her to stand up by holding onto a creeper—he does not himself touch her and thus avoids violating the *Vinaya* rule; he also uses the term *vihāra* and the technical term *dharmabhaginī* ('sister-in-religion') to refer to a nun (Vs. 46+); in Act II—if van Buitenen is right—there is even a clever spoof of the well-known incident in the Buddha's biography where he pacifies a rampaging elephant. But in the *Padmaprābhṛtika* there is an actual instance of the two lexicons—the monastic and the erotic—being deployed simultaneously in a clever double-entendre. Here a Buddhist monk is seen hurrying out of a whorehouse. When accosted, however, he says that he is just coming from the "monastery" (*vihāra*), which of course, he is, since he is coming from his "play" or "pleasure ground" (*vihāra*). His accoster, then, all but makes the double meaning explicit when he retorts: "Indeed, I know the real meaning of your *vihāra*."[10] The indications coming from the other side are even more explicit.

If we take the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* as an example—and it will be our primary focus here—there can also be no doubt that the Buddhist monks who compiled it in north India in the early centuries of the Common Era were fully aware of what Ali calls "the institution of the garden" and its cultural values in all their layered complexity. There can also be very little doubt that in compiling their texts these Buddhist monks—as we will see—attempted to assimilate their establishments to the garden, or actually saw them as belonging to that cultural category. In any case, these Buddhist monks had a detailed knowledge of the Indian garden.

Ali says, "Indeed, it seems that the first widespread appearance of specifically designated 'gardens' in early Indian sources coincided with the rise of cities and the growth of urban life." He also notes that "the institution of the garden" emerged with the growth of cities.[11] But that the Indian garden was an urban phenomenon and an urban value had,

26–29 [= *Studies in Indian Literature and Philosophy: Collected Articles of J. A. B. van Buitenen*, ed. L. Rocher (Delhi, 1988), 201–7]; and note that in what follows the *Mṛcchakaṭika* will be cited as a representative example—but only that—of what is found in classical Indian drama.

10. For both text and a translation, see J. R. A. Loman, *The Padmaprābhṛtakam: An Ancient Bhāṇa Assigned to Śūdraka* (Amsterdam, 1956) §§ 22 (1) - 24 (15); 61–62 and n. 74; see also G. Schopen, "The Learned Monk as a Comic Figure: On Reading a Buddhist Vinaya as Indian Literature," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 35 (2007): 213–14. For a good example of the continuing abundant use of forms of *vi* √ *hṛ* to refer to pleasure and erotic play long after the Buddhists had adopted the term *vihāra* to refer to their monasteries, see the text and translation of the *Daśakumāracarita* in I. Onians, *What Ten Young Men Did* (New York, 2005), 122–23, 136–37, 150–51, 292–93, 386–87, 436–37, 500–501.

11. Ali, "Gardens," 222, 250. If recent studies are correct, then the emergence of the garden coincided with the emergence of Buddhism as well; see G. Bailey and I. Mabbett, *The Sociology of Early Buddhism* (Cambridge, 2003), 85: "So far as any sort of chronological associations can be made, it is our view that the rise of Buddhism accompanied the beginnings of the second stage [of the second period of urbanism in India!]. What is clear, though, is that the canonical texts took shape as a whole somewhat later, when the full-fledged urban environment of the second stage was thoroughly familiar and taken for granted." R. Thapar, *Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2002), 140: "The Buddhist Pāli Canon . . . therefore does not coincide with the earliest phase of urbanization, but with the more mature period." Unfortunately many historians have not yet learned that there is much more to "early" Buddhist literature than just the Pāli canon, and that the latter cannot be taken as representative. For an example of the different sort of picture that can emerge when an historian takes into account literary sources other than the Pāli canon, see, however, R. Thapar, "Lay/Clerical Distinctions in Early India," in *Law, Laity, and Solidarities: Essays in Honour of Susan Reynolds*, ed. P. Stafford et al. (Manchester, 2001), 249–61.

in effect, already been noted long before in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*. As a lead-in to one of its many narratives set in a garden, the compilers of this monastic code inserted one of their typical editorial or explanatory comments that are meant to account for some element of the action to follow, and frequently constitute cultural truisms. This one said—anticipating Ali—*nagaramanuṣyāḥ udyānapriyāḥ* "men of the cities love gardens."[12]

Ali notes further that "The overall descriptions of gardens in the early Indian sources . . . suggest that they were not perceived as 'wild,' 'untamed' or 'pristine' nature, but instead, carefully constructed and highly supplemented places" (p. 223); that the character of gardens was "artificial"; that they were "places which required great material expenditure and laborious care" (p. 225); and were "highly manipulated and ornamented spaces . . . furnished with various forms of decoration—paintings, hangings, silken cloths and jewels" (p. 233). According to Śūdraka's *Mṛcchakaṭika* the owner of a garden had to go every day to look after it to ensure that it was properly drained, cleaned, thriving, and manicured (*tatra ca prekṣitum anudivasaṃ śuṣkaṃ kārayituṃ śodhayituṃ puṣṭaṃ kārayituṃ lūnaṃkārayituṃ gacchāmi*).[13] Again the monks who compiled the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* were fully aware of all this, and not infrequently refer in some detail to the "supplemented," "artificial," "manipulated and ornamented" character of the garden. Its *Kṣudrakavastu*, for example, describes what went into preparing the gardens of Śrāvastī by saying that officials had them

> . . . cleaned, and having had the stones, and gravel, and pebbles swept up, they had them removed. Sprinkled with sandal water, hung with pots of sweet scented incense, arranged all around, with streamers and banners strung out, strings of tassels suspended, strewn with various kinds of flowers, captivating—they were like a pleasure grove and garden of the gods.[14]

Although such descriptions of the Indian garden are so common in this monastic code that they could be called stencilled, like all such stencilled passages they do not always occur in exactly the same form: sometimes elements are deleted, and sometimes new ones are added. In the *Cīvaravastu*, for example, it is said that the garden is prepared not only by removing stones and gravel, aspersing it with scented water, and festooning it with cloth streamers, but also by filling it with the sounds of all sorts of singing and music (*anekagītavāditraninādita*).[15] Such spaces, it is important to note, were not just "highly supplemented places"; they were also spaces where—according to these Buddhist sources—the more gritty or less aesthetically pleasing aspects of nature were intentionally elided.

The Buddhist monks who redacted or compiled the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* were, finally, also fully aware that "more than anything, the garden was associated with love and lovers," with "erotic dalliance"—it formed, in fact, as Ali noted (p. 237)—"the ideal setting for the illicit or quasi-licit romances which formed the subject of numerous plays and poems in Sanskrit literature." As in this literature the Buddhist monks associated the garden with spring, and "spring was the season most associated with erotic pleasures (Ali, "Gardens,"

12. *Carmavastu*, GMs iii 4, 198.16—the reading given here is Dutt's; the manuscript itself is problematic and probably corrupt (this *vastu* as a whole is often problematic in the Gilgit manuscript), but the Tibetan is clear: *grong khyer gyi mi rnams skyed mos tshal la dga' bas* . . . (Derge, 'dul ba KA 271b.3) "Since men of the city delight in a garden . . ." For editorial insertions in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, see G. Schopen, "Hierarchy and Housing in a Buddhist Monastic Code: A Translation of the Sanskrit Text of the *Śayanāsanavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, Part One," *Buddhist Literature* 2 (2000): 157–58 (v. 1).

13. Kale, *Mṛichchhakaṭika*, Act IX, Vs. 7+ (316.3).

14. *Kṣudrakavastu*, Derge, 'dul ba DA 164a.6 = Tog, 'dul ba THA 245a.3.

15. *Cīvaravastu*, GMs iii 2, 16.7 = GBMs vi 798.2.

235). In the passage from the *Cīvaravastu* already mentioned—to cite but one example—when its owner goes to the garden with his women, his activity is expressed with three verbs: *krīḍati*, *ramati*, and *paricārayati*; he plays or frolics, amuses himself, and makes love. This is a stencilled string of verbs that—as Edgerton notes—is used "esp[ecially] of sexual enjoyment with women."[16] But even more common in this monastic code are references to spring. Over and over again it describes elite men taking their women in spring to gardens bursting with life. In the *Śayanāsanavastu*, for example, it is said of a very rich householder:

> *sa saṃprāpte vasantakālasamaye saṃpuṣpiteṣu pādapeṣu haṃsakrauñcamayūraśukasārikākokilajīvajīvakanighoṣite vanaṣaṇḍe sāntarjanena udyānabhūmiṃ nirgataḥ.*

> He, when spring time had arrived, when the trees were in full bloom, when the groves resounded with geese and cranes and peacocks, with parrots, mynas, cuckoos, and pheasants, went out to the grounds of the garden together with his women.[17]

That—incidentally—these excursions taxed the staying power of at least the men involved is suggested by the fact that the next sentence not infrequently says something like:

> *sa tatrodyāne sukham anubhūya khedam āpanno middham avakrāntaḥ.*

> He, having embraced his pleasure there in the garden, was exhausted and fell asleep.[18]

This description of a garden in spring with its strong aesthetic or erotic overtones—the cry of the cuckoo or koel, for example, was "supposed to inspire tender emotions," and when "heard in springtime is one of the most powerful symbols of love, again and again referred to in classical literature"[19]—would seem in fact to be more at home in Sanskrit drama and erotic poetry than in Buddhist *vinaya*. It, however, occurs repeatedly throughout the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*—more than a half dozen times in its *Saṅghabhedavastu* alone—and this might therefore suggest, for example, that Vidyākara, probably a Buddhist monk, who compiled the first anthology of Sanskrit court poetry in the twelfth century, was not a fluke, and that many literate Buddhist monks might have had an easy familiarity with classical Indian literature long before, or breathed at least the same atmosphere.[20] There are other indications of this as well. But while it is, of course, interesting that the Buddhist monks who redacted the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* were fully familiar with the aesthetic values and erotic overtones associated with the garden in spring found also in Classical Sanskrit literature, and frequently deployed them in their narratives, it is perhaps even more interesting that they also deployed these same aesthetic values and erotic overtones in their descriptions of their own "monasteries," and that they described their ideal "monastery" as, in effect, a garden in spring.

The stereotypic description of the ideal beautiful Mūlasarvāstivādin monastery is made up, by and large, of three stencilled phrases used singly or in various combinations. In

16. F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* (New Haven, 1953) s.v. *paricārayati*.

17. *Śayanāsanavastu* (Gnoli) 32.3; see also *Saṅghabhedavastu* (Gnoli) ii 8.3; 45.2; 109.11; 121.6; 139.26; etc.

18. *Saṅghabhedavastu* (Gnoli) ii 8.4; 45.6.

19. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* s.v. *kokila*; K. Karttunen, "'Sparrows in Love': The Display and Pairing of Birds in Sanskrit Literature," in *On the Understanding of Other Cultures: Proceedings of the International Conference on Sanskrit and Related Studies to Commemorate the Centenary of the Birth of Stanislaw Schayer (1899–1941)*, ed. P. Balcerowicz and M. Mejor (Warsaw, 2000), 197–205, esp. 198.

20. The anthology in question is the *Subhāṣitaratnakośa*, about which more will be said immediately below. On its compiler see D. D. Kosambi and V. V. Gokhale, *The Subhāṣitaratnakośa* (Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 42) (Cambridge, Mass., 1957) xxvii–xxxix, and D. H. H. Ingalls, *An Anthology of Sanskrit Court Poetry* (Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 44) (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), 30.

perhaps the most economical of the descriptions—and an element that commonly occurs in the various combinations—the *vihāra* is described as

> *snying dang mig 'phrog bar bgyid pa mtho ris kyi thems skas su gyur pa . . .*
>
> stealing (or 'carrying away', or 'captivating') the heart and eye, a veritable stairway to heaven . . . [21]

The second component here—"a veritable stairway to heaven"—has, for example, a clear echo in a Pāla-period inscription from Nālandā that records the gift by a prominent monk of an edifice described as *sopānamārgam iva muktip[uras]ya* "like a stairway to the city of liberation."[22] But the first expression—"stealing the heart and eye"—has much broader associations and was almost certainly not invented by monastic redactors: it too has deep roots in Classical Sanskrit literature.

In a paper entitled "Words for Beauty in Classical Sanskrit Poetry" D. H. H. Ingalls collected his examples from the *Subhāṣitaratnakośa*. The verses in this anthology—the one already referred to compiled by the Buddhist monk Vidyākara—deal, in Ingalls' words,

> . . . with descriptions of the seasons, with the charms of women and with love. They contain as high a percentage of expressions for beauty as any Sanskrit text I am acquainted with and they offer the further advantage of being drawn from many poets, so that they do not suffer from the bias for particular phrases or avoidances of any one author.[23]

Significantly, prominent among the expressions for beauty in this representative anthology of Classical Sanskrit verse are the phrases *haranti hṛdayam* or *hṛdayāni* and *mano harati*, "they steal (or 'carry away', etc.) the heart (or hearts)," and "it steals (or 'carries off') the mind," exactly, in part, the phrase applied in our monastic code to a "monastery."[24] According to Ingalls *haranti hṛdayam* occurs at least nine times in the *Subhāṣitaratnakośa*, the variant *mano harati* at least three times. In verse 171—to cite a particularly germane example—it says "the cuckoos in the midst of the forest steal one's heart" (*haranti hṛdayaṃ madhyevanaṃ kokilāḥ*); verse 428 says, in Ingalls' translation: "Such wealth of buttocks would slow the walk of anyone; / the curve of your breast, sweet lass, would carry off even

21. *Vibhaṅga*, Derge, NYA 'dul ba 146b.4. The Tibetan is cited here because, although the expression occurs more than half a dozen times in the description of a beautiful *vihāra* in the *Pravrajyāvastu* and the *Vibhaṅga* alone, a full Sanskrit version of these passages has not survived (*Pravrajyāvastu* [Eimer] ii 271.8; *Vibhaṅga*, Derge, 'dul ba CA 153b.3; 155b.3; CHA 156b.5; 184a.1; NYA 146b.4; 147b.3). There is, however, not the slightest doubt about the sense of the Tibetan, Vogel and Wille translating it as "captivating heart and eyes" (V. Näther, C. Vogel, and K. Wille, "The Final Leaves of the Pravrajyāvastu Portion of the Vinayavastu Manuscript Found Near Gilgit," in *Sanskrit-Texte aus dem buddhistischen Kanon: Neuentdeckungen und Neueditionen III* [Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfan-Funden. Beiheft 6] [Göttingen, 1996] 273), and while an attested Sanskrit equivalent is not yet at hand it could not have differed much from the expressions quoted below from Sanskrit literary sources.

22. H. Sastri, *Nalanda and its Epigraphical Material* (Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, vol. 66) (Delhi, 1942), 90–91 (L.17). For the comparison of gardens with the heavens, see Kale, *Mṛichchhakaṭika*, Act IV, Vs. 30+ (170.15).

23. D. H. H. Ingalls, "Words for Beauty in Classical Sanskrit Poetry," in *Indological Studies in Honor of W. Norman Brown*, ed. E. Bender (American Oriental Series, vol. 47) (New Haven, 1962), 87–107.

24. Because my recent gloss ". . . captivating the heart and eye—not, be it noted, the head . . ." (Schopen, *Buddhist Monks*, 32) is open to easy misunderstanding, it is important to note that "In classical āyurveda, consciousness (*citta, cetanā*) is located in the heart" and that "the heart is thought to be the seat of consciousness" (D. Wujastyk, *The Roots of Ayurveda: Selections from Sanskrit Medical Writings*, rev. ed. [London, 2001], 249, 328); see also A. Roşu, *Les conceptions psychologiques dans les textes médicaux indiens* (Publications de l'Institut de Civilisation Indienne, Série in-8° Fasc. 43) (Paris, 1978), 209ff.

another's heart (*hṛdayam aparasyāpi harati*)."[25] And the same or similar expressions (*mano harati, avabadhnāti dṛṣṭim*, "it captures my sight") occur three times in the *Mṛcchakaṭika*, and three times in the *Kāmasūtra* (*manohara, cittahārin*).[26] The beauty of the Mūlasarvāstivādin *vihāra* is here, then, expressed—as in the case of the garden—in a very secular, aesthetic, and erotic language. But the shared language used to describe both the garden and the *vihāra* is in fact even more explicit.

If the beauty of a Buddhist *vihāra* could be regularly expressed in a monastic code with the same expression that is used in Classical Sanskrit poetry to describe the loveliness of the curve of a young woman's breast, or the erotic cry of the cuckoo, then it would not be at all surprising to find that those same *vihāra*s were also repeatedly described in the same terms as a garden in spring. Such gardens—as we have seen—are said to have trees in full bloom and to have "resounded with geese and cranes and peacocks, with parrots, mynas, cuckoos, and pheasants" (*saṃpuṣpiteṣu pādapeṣu haṃsakrauñcamayūraśukasārikākokilajīvajīvakanighoṣite*). But a beautiful Buddhist *vihāra* is described in almost exactly the same way in the *Cīvaravastu*. It is said to have been sited in a lovely spot,

> . . . *nānāvṛkṣopaśobhite haṃsakrauñcamayūraśukaśārikākokilābhinikūjite vividhapuṣpaphalopaśobhite.*
>
> . . . made lovely with various trees, filled with the sound of geese and cranes and peacocks, of parrots, mynas, cuckoos, and pheasants, made lovely with all kind of flowers and fruit.[27]

Indeed, in the same way that the description of bird song forms a standard component in the stencilled description of the garden in spring in our monastic code, just so—and in almost exactly the same words—it forms a part of the description of the ideal beautiful monastery, which is also repeatedly described as "resounding with geese and cranes and peacocks, with parrots, mynas, cuckoos and pheasants."[28] This is a far cry from the silence of the cloister, and culturally evokes a very different set of feelings.

It has been suggested already elsewhere that by describing the beauty of their monasteries in very much the same terms that they use to describe a garden in spring, the redactors of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* wanted to assimilate the one to the other, the former to the latter.[29] But in fact this assimilation appears to have taken place on a number of levels. Certainly it was already present—as we have seen—in the Buddhist choice of words for what we call their monasteries: *vihāra* and *ārāma*, while they might have come to refer to monasteries, actually meant 'pleasure ground' or 'garden'. This assimilation would have been favored or furthered by the fact that both monastery and garden were also located in

25. The text is cited from Kosambi and Gokhale, *Subhāṣitaratnakośa*, the second translation from Ingalls, *Anthology*, 172.

26. Kale, *The Mṛichchhakaṭika*, Act II, Vs. 6; Act V. Vs. 38+ (204.26); Act IX, Vs. 33+ (344.1); D. Śāstrī, *The Kāmasūtram* (Kashi Sanskrit Series, vol. 29) (Varanasi, 1964) I.4.12; III.3.19; V.4.36 (= W. Doniger and S. Kakar, *Kamasutra* [Oxford, 2002], 18, 84, 118). It is at least worth noting that even late Buddhist monastic authors continue to use the same or similar phrases in describing the same sorts of things. In his *Bodhisattvayogācāracatuḥśatakaṭīkā*, Candrakīrti, for example, uses the phrase *mig dang yid du 'thad pa* "[it] delights their eyes and their minds" in reference to a young woman's body; and the phrase *snying dang mig tu sdug pa* "[they] enchant both his eyes and his mind" in reference to shapely women—Derge, bstan 'gyur, dbu ma YA 59b.4, 63b.6 (see also 43b.3, 46b.2); the translations are from K. C. Lang, *Four Illusions: Candrakīrti's Advice for Travelers on the Bodhisattva Path* (Oxford, 2003), 158 (§229), 166 (§252); see also 130 (§84), 135 (§111).

27. *Cīvaravastu*, GMs iii 2, 107.15.

28. *Pravrajyāvastu* (Eimer) ii 271.8; Näther, Vogel, and Wile, "Final Leaves," 254.28; 255.31; etc.

29. Schopen, *Buddhist Monks*, 33–34.

the same spaces: in the suburbs or immediate surroundings of urban settlements. The preferred location of Buddhist monasteries outside of, but near, towns or settlements is, of course, well known.[30] But this was also where Indian gardens were located.[31] In the *Raghuvaṃśa* (xiv.30), for example, when Rāma stood on the roof of his palace gazing out on Ayodhyā he saw ". . . the gardens at the boundaries of the city, crowded with playful citizens."[32] In the *Mṛcchakaṭika* the hero's garden is some distance from the city (*nagarāt sudūram*) and a *vihāra* is nearby.[33] In the *Vibhaṅga* of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, when a man and his daughter who are traveling by cart to Śrāvastī are getting close, they first see parks (*ārāma*), ponds or tanks (*puṣkariṇī, taḍāga*), shrines (*devakula*), gardens (*udyāna*), wells (*kūpa*), and *vihāra*s; and almost exactly the same list is also associated with the suburbs in the *Mṛcchakaṭika*.[34]

The shared location of garden and *vihāra* in the local landscape is expressed even more clearly perhaps in the narrative accounts of the founding of famous *vihāra*s like the Jetavana in Śrāvastī and the Ghoṣilārāma in Kauśāmbī. When both Anāthapiṇḍada and Ghoṣila return to their native cities with the intention of founding a *vihāra* there for the Blessed One, the texts in both cases say in virtually identical words

> *so 'praviśann eva śrāvastīm ārāmeṇārāmam udyānenodyānam upavanenopavanaṃ caṅkramam anucaṅkramyamāṇo suvicarann evam āha: katarah sa pṛthivīpradeśo bhaviṣyati śrāvastyā nātidūre nātyāsanne . . . yatrāhaṃ bhagavato 'rthāya vihāraṃ māpayiṣyāmiti.*
>
> He [Anāthapiṇḍada or Ghoṣila], without even [first] entering Śrāvastī [or Kauśāmbī], wandering on the paths from park to park, from garden to garden, from grove to grove, carefully considering them, said this: "Which will be that spot, not too far, not too near Śrāvastī [or Kauśāmbī] . . . where I will have a *vihāra* built for the Blessed One?"[35]

Here in both accounts, when the laymen Anāthapiṇḍada and Ghoṣila return to their respective towns but do not enter them, they encounter—obviously in their suburbs—parks, gardens, and groves. And it is there in the midst of the city's parks, gardens, and groves that they look for a place to establish a monastery. Neither account need necessarily tell us anything about these historically known *vihāras*, but—and perhaps more importantly—both indicate that for their redactors it was a given that parks and gardens were located on the margins of

30. See the passage cited below in the accounts of the founding of the Jetavana and the Ghoṣilārāma.

31. Again, it should be kept in mind that there were—as Ali notes—also gardens attached to palaces and urban households (Ali, "Gardens," 223 and n. 7 above).

32. Cited from G. Roth, "Ayodhyā and Gaṅgā," in *Gedenkschrift J. W. de Jong* (Studia Philologica Buddhica. Monograph Series, vol. 17), ed. H. W. Bodewitz and M. Hara (Tokyo, 2004) 122; see also L. Renou, *Le Raghuvaṃça (La lignée des fils du soliel)* (Les joyaux de l'orient, vol. 6) (Paris, 1928) 158.

33. Kale, *Mṛichchhakaṭika*, Act VII, Vs. 3+ (245.24) and Act VII, Vs. 46+ (302.23).

34. *Vibhaṅga*, Derge, 'dul ba NYA 37a.3; Kale, *Mṛichchhakaṭika*, Act IX, Vs. 30+ (340.7). For some further references to the location of "pleasure gardens," etc., in the "suburbs" in the *Daśakumāracarita*, see—for both text and translation—Onians, *What Ten Young Men Did*, 90–91, 94–95, 122–23, 136–37, 230–31, 292–93, 380–81, 396–97.

35. *Śayanāsanavastu* (Gnoli) 18.32 = *Saṅghabhedavastu* (Gnoli) i 171.20; *Vibhaṅga*, Derge, 'dul ba NYA 141a.2. Gnoli actually reads *sa praviśann eva śrāvastīm* in both places, but the Tibetan translation of all three makes it clear that this cannot be correct. The Tibetan translation of the *Śayanāsanavastu* has *de mnyan yod du ma zhugs pa nyid du* (Derge, 'dul ba GA 198b.7) and the translation of the *Saṅghabhedavastu* has exactly the same thing (Derge, 'dul ba DA 82b.3). In the account of the founding of the Ghoṣilārāma in the *Vibhaṅga* the text says: *de nas khyim bdag gdangs can kau śāmbir ma zhugs pa kho nar* (Derge, 'dul ba NYA 141a.2). Indeed the whole point here—lost in Gnoli's reading—is that Anāthapiṇḍada/Ghoṣila were so keen on establishing a *vihāra* that they did not even go home first. This in fact is explicitly said later in the *Śayanāsana- and Saṅghabheda-vastus*, where again Gnoli reads *sa praviśann eva svaṃ niveśanaṃ* for what should be—again according to the Tibetan—*so 'praviśann eva svaṃ niveśanaṃ*.

urban settlements, and that this was the culturally natural area in which to look for a site to locate a *vihāra*.[36]

But in addition to being linked by the fact that they shared the same space in the local landscape, the assimilation of monastery and garden went even further. Both garden and monastery were—according to our *vinaya*—the focus of sightseeing excursions on the part of well-to-do ladies, or, to put it differently, the Buddhist monastery was very much on the ladies' garden circuit, and both were objects of aesthetic appreciation.

Not once, but at least four times, the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Vibhaṅga* directly links excursions to gardens with visits to *vihāras*. The narrative that explains the promulgation of the second *saṅghāvaśeṣa* rule in the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Prātimokṣa*—and this is the second most serious category of offense—begins in part by saying:

> *mnyan yod na gnas pa'i bram ze dang khyim bdag gi chung ma rnams kyi kun tu spyod pa ni skyed mos tshal du song ste / rgyal byed kyi tshal du 'jug pa dang / gtsug lag khang blta ba dang / bcom ldan 'das dang dge slong gnas brtan gnas brtan rnams kyi zhabs la phyag 'tshal du 'gro bas bram ze dang / khyim bdag gi chung ma rab tu mang po dag skyed mos tshal du byung ste gtsug lag khang lta 'dod pas rgyal byed kyi tshal ga la ba der dong ngo /* (Derge Ca 206a.2)

> Since it was the usual practice (*dharmatā*) of the wives of the brahmins and householders who lived in Śrāvastī when they went out to the gardens (*udyāna*) to enter the Jetavana and view the *vihāra*, and go to pay reverence to the feet of the Blessed One and the various Elders, so a large number of the wives of brahmins and householders went out to the gardens, and, because they wished to view the *vihāra*, they went to the Jetavana.[37]

This statement is then repeated verbatim in the narratives attached to the third and fourth *saṅghāvaśeṣa*s as well, and virtually so in a later section.[38] In all these cases the presence of these well-off ladies touring the *vihāra* leads—and this too would follow culturally from the assimilation of the *vihāra* and the garden—to sexual contact between a monk and the female visitors, and although such contact is considered an offense, such tours of the *vihāra* by wealthy women are never forbidden.

Notice that the activities described in these passages are presented as *dharmatā* 'the usual practice'. This is a term whose general sense is clear enough, even if it does not lend itself to a precise, single translation. Edgerton gives "natural and normal custom, habit, natural condition, what is to be expected, normal state, rule, standard custom, ordinary thing."[39] Notice what *dharmatā* governs: it was the usual practice of the women of Śrāvastī *both* to go out to the gardens *and* to include a visit to the *vihāra* in these outings. But notice too that the visit to the *vihāra* is not primary. The primary activity is touring the gardens. Visiting the *vihāra* is an add-on. Their motive is not primarily religious or devout. This is confirmed, it seems, by the fact that although they do pay their respects to the Buddha and the Elders, this comes last. First and foremost—and this is repeated twice—they go "to view" the *vihāras*, and they enter the Jetavana "because they wished to view the *vihāra*."

36. The site that has been identified as the actual Jetavana is in fact "roughly at a distance of about 500 meters from" Mahet, i.e., the walled city of Śrāvastī (K. K. Sinha, *Excavations at Sravasti—1959* [Monograph of the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, vol. 2] [Varanasi, 1967], 5 & fig. 1), while the site identified as the Ghoṣilārāma is described as "within the walled city" of Kauśāmbī (*An Encyclopaedia of Indian Archaeology*, ed. A. Ghosh [New Delhi, 1989], 2:214; G. R. Sharma, "Excavations at Kauśāmbī 1949–1955," in *Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology, Volume XVI for the Years 1948–1953* [Leyden, 1958], xlii, fig. 2).

37. *Vibhaṅga* Derge, 'dul ba CA 206a.2.

38. *Vibhaṅga*, Derge, 'dul ba CA 215a.5; 221a.3; NYA 36b.4.

39. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, s.v. *dharmatā*.

The *vihāra*—not the Buddha and the monks—is what they want to see, and these were in many instances, and from almost any point of view, quite an amazing sight.

It is, of course, very difficult for us to appreciate the aesthetic impact that a Buddhist monastery had on a farmer from Bihar or a merchant from Mathurā, even though our stencilled passages are undoubtedly meant to express some of this. Such places "stole his heart and eye" and transported him to other realms—they were "veritable stairways to heaven." They did so in part because they, like a garden in spring, were filled with the sound of geese and cranes and peacocks. And they did so, in part, because like the Indian garden they were "highly supplemented places" and had constructions that really were something to see. A fuller form of the stencilled description of the ideal beautiful *vihāra* that has come down to us in Sanskrit reads

> . . . *vihāraṃ udgatamañcapīṭhavedikājālavātāyanagavākṣaparisaṇḍamaṇḍitaṃ nānāvṛkṣaparivāritaṃ puṣkariṇītaḍāgopaśobhitaṃ haṃsakrauñcamayūraśukaśārikākokilābhinikūjitaṃ devabhavanam iva śriyā jvalantaṃ*

> . . . the *vihāra* was adorned with raised seats on platforms, railings, latticed windows, round windows, and flights of stairs. It was surrounded by all sorts of trees, made lovely with ponds and pools, filled with the sound of geese and cranes and peacocks, of parrots, mynas, cuckoos, and pheasants, like the dwelling of a god shining with splendor.[40]

Here the markers of the beautiful garden that have already been noted (trees and bird song) are supplemented by reference to water (ponds and pools) and, again as Ali has noted, "water was an integral element in all early Indian gardens" ("Gardens," 231). But these in turn are seamlessly combined with the beauty of the architectural components—railings, latticed windows, etc. Indeed, to judge by the imitative facades of the monasteries that still survive with their railings and elaborate windows in the Western Caves, it is, again, hard to imagine the impact that such monastic buildings would have had on farmer or merchant—they probably would not have seen such things anywhere else. There almost certainly would have been, to use Coomaraswamy's translation of *saṃvega*, an "aesthetic shock."[41] But to pursue the aesthetics of Buddhist monastic architecture further here would lead too far afield, and we can only note two additional things that garden and monastery shared.

As already noted, Ali has said, "Gardens were also furnished with various forms of decoration"; and the first of such "decorations" that he lists are paintings ("Gardens," 233). He rightly cites as the most striking instance of this the fifth-century Sri Lankan garden at Sigiriya, but paintings—often portraits—are associated with gardens in a number of ways in Classical Sanskrit literature. That Buddhist *vihāra*s also had paintings—sometimes in seeming overwhelming abundance—is well known and witnessed, if a witness is thought necessary, by the sad remnants remaining at Ajanta and Bagh. The latter is in fact referred to in an inscription as *kalāyanavihāra*, which Mirashi translates as "the monastery called Kalāyana (The Abode of Art)."[42] But, as pointed out long ago by Lalou, the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* contains a text that asserts, in effect, that there were paintings in Buddhist monasteries from the beginning.[43] It also contains another text that says that when people heard this, "many hundreds of thousands of people came then *to see*" the monastery; and it

40. Näther, Vogel, and Wille, "Final Leaves," 254.28.

41. A. K. Coomaraswamy, "Saṃvega: Aesthetic Shock," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 7 (1943): 174–79.

42. V. V. Mirashi, *Inscriptions of the Kalachuri-chedi Era* (Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, vol. 4) (Ootacamund, 1955), 19–21 [Bagh Cave Plate of Subandhu, line 5].

43. M. Lalou, "Notes sur la décoration des monastères bouddhiques," *Revues des arts asiatiques* 5 (1930): 183–85.

deals in particular with a certain brahmin who went to the monastery "*to see* its wonders" (*ltad mo, kutūhala*), and was so moved that he donated a very expensive blanket to the Community of Monks.[44] Significantly, one of the texts dealing with women going to see the Jetavana monastery as part of an excursion to the gardens also refers to the power of attraction of its paintings. In this instance the women take with them a young lady who was visiting Śrāvastī. But while they were touring the individual monks' quarters, the young lady, the text says, "seeing paintings, went elsewhere" (*ri mo lta zhing gzhan du song ngo*). When the group left, the young lady did not notice: "that young lady was unaware that the others had left and sat gazing at the paintings on that same porch" (*bo mo des gzhan dag byung ba ma tshor nas sgo khang de nyid na ri mo lta zhing 'dug go /*).[45]

In these last examples the emphasis is quite squarely on the *vihāra* or monastery as an object of the visitors' view and, for those who maintain that components shared across sectarian lines in Buddhist canonical literature must be old and must go back to a "presectarian" period, such an emphasis must be old.[46] It occurs in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* to be sure—and some think this is the latest of monastic codes—but it occurs as well in the Pāli *Vinaya*, and some think this to be the oldest. In the Pāli *Vinaya*, as in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, the narrative associated with the promulgation of two of the first *saṅghāvaśeṣa* offenses involving monks having sexual interaction with women deal with women coming to see—*pekkhati* 'to behold, regard, observe, look at'—a *vihāra*, in these cases specifically, and almost certainly secondarily, said to be that of the monk Udāyi. Here the *vihāra* is also explicitly said to be "beautiful, something that must be seen, and lovely" (*vihāro abhirūpo hoti dassanīyo pāsādiko*). In one case the text says, "many people came wishing to look at the *vihāra*" (*bahū manussā . . . vihārapekkhakā āgacchanti*); in the other "large numbers of women went to the park wishing to look at the *vihāra*" (*sambahulā itthiya ārāmaṃ āgamaṃsu vihārapekkhikāyo*).[47] That the *vihāra* or Buddhist monastery was—like the Indian garden—an object of view and the goal of, quite literally, sight-seeing excursions, especially by ladies, was, then, either a very old, or a widespread, conflated idea shared across sectarian boundaries or different South Asian cultural spheres, Indian and Sri Lankan.

By this point, at least a case should be clear for suggesting several things: that the monk redactors of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* were fully aware of the cultural, aesthetic, and erotic values attached to the Indian garden that are also expressed in classical secular Sanskrit literature; that these same monks constructed their own narratives in a variety of ways that would have assimilated, if not identified, their *vihāras* with such gardens: they used a similar vocabulary to refer to both garden and *vihāra*; they located both *vihāra* and garden in the same areas of the local landscape; they described both in part in the same ways: the stencilled description of the ideal beautiful *vihāra* incorporates the equally stencilled

44. Schopen, *Buddhist Monks*, 35–36.

45. *Vibhaṅga*, Derge, 'dul ba NYA 40b.7.

46. See G. Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu, 1997), 25–30.

47. H. Oldenberg, *The Vinaya Piṭakaṃ* (London, 1881), vol. 3, 119.13ff.; 127.21ff. = I. B. Horner, *The Book of the Discipline* (Sacred Books of the Buddhists, vol. 10) (Oxford, 1938), pt. I, 199ff.; 214ff. Whereas the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* sets its narratives involving sexual interaction between a monk and women in the Jetavana, the Pāli *Vinaya* places (or displaces) them off in an unnamed forest; but since the monk involved in both *Vinayas* is Udāyin, and Udāyin in both *Vinayas* is a well-known voluptuary as far away as possible from a forest monk, and a resident of the Jetavana, this looks decidedly odd. It may result from a certain fastidiousness on the part of the redactors of the Pāli text that made them reluctant to have such events take place at the Jetavana, one of the most important monasteries in the Buddhist narrative world.

description of the garden in spring; and both are objects of aesthetic appreciation and sight-seeing, the *vihāra* being repeatedly included as part of excursions to see the gardens; and that, finally, in both garden and *vihāra* nature was an object of the senses—sight, hearing, smell—but that in neither was this "'wild,' 'untamed,' or 'pristine' nature"; it was unnatural nature, "carefully constructed and highly supplemented . . . artificial." This was nature as—above all else—an object of view that was carefully framed. But the framing of nature as an aesthetic object by Buddhist monks in India may have gone well beyond their literature.

The final shared component of the Indian garden and the Buddhist monastery that can be dealt with here has again to do with the aesthetic gaze and view, but it is not the view *of* the garden or *vihāra*, it is the view *from* both. Ali ("Gardens," 233), referring to Sigiriya, the *Mayamata*—a Sanskrit text on architecture—and the *Svapnavāsavadatta*, one of the plays attributed to Bhāsa, says:

> Elevated spots created the opportunities of vistas within the landscape of the garden. Numerous holes in the sides and on top of nearly every larger rock in the boulder garden [at Sigiriya] formed the footings of timber beams, and in some cases, brick foundations for various structures that were perched on top of them. On the summit of one rock in the boulder garden is a throne hewn from the living stone. The throne suggests what a later source is explicit about, that the garden was to be furnished with places for the king and his retinue to sit, rest, and view the surrounding landscape . . . the view from the throne in the boulder garden must have been spectacular indeed.

And this observation by Ali about the Indian garden takes on particular significance when it is noted that there are good reasons for thinking that many actual Buddhist monasteries in early India were intentionally sited to, in effect, frame such "spectacular" views, and some were provided—again like his gardens—with benches that, it seems, could only have been meant as places for both visitors and residents in the monastery "to sit, rest, and view the surrounding landscape."

The beauty of the views provided by the location or siting of Buddhist monasteries in India was noted virtually from the beginning of the archeological literature, especially in regard to such establishments that were found at places without a previous Buddhist history, or no connection with the life of the founder, and which, therefore, must have been selected for some other reason. Speaking of Satdhāra, for example, one of the cluster of sites that included Sāñchi, Alexander Cunningham said already in 1854:

> The hill on which the [Satdhāra] topes stand here forms a perpendicular cliff, beneath which flows the Besali River through a deep rocky glen. The view up the river is one of the most beautiful I have seen in India [and he had seen by then a great deal of the latter]. Above are the topes . . . Beneath are the clear emerald waters of the Besali; on the one side darkly shadowed by the overhanging trees and frowning cliffs; on the other side sparkling bright in the noon-day sun. The selection of this lovely spot shows that the Buddhist Bhikshu was not without a lively appreciation of the beauties of that nature which he worshipped under the name of Dharma.[48]

48. A. Cunningham, *The Bhilsa Topes; or, Buddhist Monuments of Central India* (London, 1854), 320–21 (these page numbers refer to the 1997 reprint published by Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers; in the 1966 reprint by Indological Book House the passage occurs on p. 207). Satdhāra, incidentally, has recently been "rediscovered"—together with some new inscriptions and paintings in a "natural rock shelter"—and appears from the account so far published to have been a much larger and more significant site than previously thought; see R. C. Agrawal, "Stupas and Monasteries: A Recent Discovery from Satdhara, India," in *South Asian Archaeology, 1995: Proceedings of the 13th International Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists*, ed. R. and B. Allchin (New Delhi, 1997), 1:403–15.

Cunningham was, of course, a British civil servant who started his career in India as a military engineer, but he was also an amateur painter and, according to Imam, "he inherited from his father a talent for writing poetry and a romantic turn of mind. He adored old trees," and "scenery" not infrequently "moved him to poetry"—Imam in fact cites a part of the passage just quoted as one such instance.[49] Cunningham's description of the view from Satdhāra could, then, be dismissed as just another bit of evidence for the "picturesque" movement that has been so deeply implicated in the colonial enterprise,[50] but such observations about Buddhist monastic sites continued to be made for a very long time, and in very different places. Almost seventy years later, for example, A. Stein, also in the employ of the colonialist state, noted in regard to the Buddhist site at Nal in Lower Swat:

> The site near Nal . . . proved a pleasing example of the care with which those old Buddhist monks knew how to select sacred spots and place their monastic establishments by them. A glorious view down the fertile valley to Thāna, picturesque rocky spurs around, clumps of firs and cedars higher up, and the rare boon of a spring close by—all combined to give charm to the spot. Even those who do not seek future bliss in Nirvāṇa could fully enjoy it.[51]

Stein here even uses the word "picturesque," but he also seems to want to distance the modern viewer from "those old Buddhist monks" who—presumably—did "seek future bliss in Nirvāṇa," and yet assert that the "glorious view" and the "charm" of the spot were at the same time equally sensible for both. He also presents the monastic site at Nal not as unique, but as an "example" of a much more widely observable set of circumstances, one instance only of the care with which Buddhist monasteries were sited to frame a view of natural features in the local landscape, and few, if any, of his contemporaries had seen as many South and Central Asian Buddhist monasteries as he had. But again—as with Cunningham—Stein appears to have been particularly partial or sensitive to natural views. In her biography of him Mirsky says of Stein:

> However simple his living requirements were, one element was vital: a view. His letters are filled with descriptions of the views his tent commanded. Nature is always mentioned and always sketched in: the panorama of mighty mountain ranges and their glaciers, of forested hills and flower-carpeted meadows; of the vast Taklamakan desert . . . His letters describing this terrain, which he covered on foot, by camel and horse, move at the same slow pace as they attempt to convey something of what he saw and felt.

She also refers to his "response to nature" and says—using a phrase of particular interest in light of textual descriptions of the beautiful *vihāra* cited above—"he responded to views

49. A. Imam, *Sir Alexander Cunningham and the Beginnings of Indian Archaeology* (Asiatic Society of Pakistan Publication, no. 19) (Dacca, 1966), 222.

50. Of many possibilities, see P. Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford, 1977), 120–40; M. Archer and R. Lightbown, *India Observed: India as Viewed by British Artists 1760–1860* (London, 1982); N. B. Dirks, "Guiltless Spoliations: Picturesque Beauty, Colonial Knowledge, and Colin Mackenzie's Survey of India," in *Perceptions of South Asia's Visual Past*, ed. C. B. Asher and T. R. Metcalf (New Delhi, 1994), 211–32.

51. A. Stein, *On Alexander's Track to the Indus: Personal Narrative of Explorations on the North-West Frontier of India* (London, 1929), 17–18 (see also similar remarks at pp. 27, 35). A "first draft" of this passage is cited from his unpublished field narrative by one of Stein's biographers: "The first day took me up to the foot of the Mora Pass where diggings done for Deane in 1897 brought to light a mass of fine Buddhist relievos brought to safety in the Calcutta Museum. Those old Buddhists knew how to select sacred spots—a glorious view down the valley, picturesque rocky spurs clothed with clumps of firs & cedars and the rare boon of a spring close by—give charm to the spot for those, too, who do not seek the future bliss in Nirvana" (J. Mirsky, *Sir Aurel Stein, Archaeological Explorer* [Chicago, 1977], 425).

that charmed the eye."[52] Whether John Marshall—who was fourteen years younger than Stein, but who was also for some time his boss—had the same partiality or sensitivity to nature as an object of view is not known.[53] But when he described the site of the Buddhist *vihāra* at Kālawān near Taxila in 1951, he certainly sounded like Stein:

> The position [of the *vihāra*] *as usual*, was a well-chosen one, having the advantage of being on the cool side of the hill and commanding a singularly fine view both of the valley to the North, with its winding stream and pleasantly terraced cultivation, and of the rugged overshadowing heights behind it on the South . . .[54]

Here the view may have been "singularly fine," but the site of the monastery that framed it, or focussed the individual on it, was "as usual . . . a well-chosen one." For both Stein and Marshall the specific sites they were describing were, then, only examples of what was—by implication—a common characteristic of the siting of the Buddhist monasteries they knew. Such siting was—as it was at Kālawān—chosen, they seem to imply, to intentionally exploit or frame a "glorious" or "singularly fine" view available in the local landscape. Such observations, moreover, continued to be repeated. Another thirty years after Marshall, and in reference to the siting of Chaitya VIII at the center of the monastic complex at Mahad, one of the numerous Buddhist caves sites in Western India, M. K. Dhavalikar said, "The artists [read: "monks"] have exhibited their skill in selecting the location of this cave which affords a panoramic view of the Mahad township and the lush green rice fields with the Sahyadri ranges in the background."[55] This observation, made in 1984, testifies to the continuity of the kind of impact that Buddhist monastic sites had on the *modern* observer, and again emphasizes the "skill" involved in their selection, but it also indicates that it was not just foreigners or colonial agents imbued with their own notions of the "picturesque" who made such observations. Dhavalikar, a modern, scientifically trained Indian archeologist and seasoned field archeologist, did extensive excavation work on Chalcolithic sites in Central and Western India, and was instrumental in promoting the methods of processual archeology associated with Binford and White.[56] Indeed, what is certainly among the most expansive of such observations comes from yet another thoroughly modern Indian archeologist, and his observations are particularly interesting because they raise an obvious issue that was avoided by others: even in purportedly "unchanging India" it seems unreasonable to suppose that the views "those old Buddhist monks" saw when they first sited their monasteries had not changed—sometimes dramatically—by the time a Stein or Marshall or Dhavalikar saw them. These next observations also introduce an architectural element at these sites for which it

52. Mirsky, *Sir Aurel Stein*, 15, 60, 64; see also 99, 102, 149, 150, 200, 284, 308, 309, 310, 311, 313, 316, 399, etc. This aspect of Stein's personality receives less emphasis in a second, more recent biography, but see A. Walker, *Aurel Stein: Pioneer of the Silk Road* (London, 1995) 19 ("his romantic imagination"), 31, 32, 34, 44, 124, 146 ("his tendency to maudlin sentiment"), 147–48, 156, 178, 195, 203, 214, 221, 236, 250, etc.

53. In spite of his very great impact on Indian archaeology, Marshall ". . . has remained a shadowy figure in many ways. No biography of him has been written to date . . ." (N. Lahiri, "John Marshall's Appointment as Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India: A Survey of the Papers Pertaining to his Selection," *South Asian Studies* 13 [1997]: 127). There are some interesting references to Marshall in Mirsky, *Sir Aurel Stein* (see index s.v. Marshall), but they are by and large limited to his relationship with Stein, which appears to have not always been easy, especially in the beginning.

54. J. Marshall, *Taxila: An Illustrated Account of Archaeological Excavations Carried out at Taxila under the Orders of the Government of India between the Years 1913 and 1934* (Cambridge, 1951), 1:322, emphasis added; see also 368.

55. M. K. Dhavalikar, *Late Hinayana Caves of Western India* (Poona, 1984), 44.

56. A good idea of the range of Dhavalikar's work can be seen in entries under his name in R. B. M. Ridinger, *The Archaeology of the Indian Subcontinent and Sir Lanka: A Selected Bibliography* (Westport, Conn., 2001).

might be easier to establish an intentional motive. In characterizing Kanheri as a whole, S. Nagaraju—our thoroughly modern Indian archeologist—has said:

> Kanheri's situation is idyllic . . . despite the location of [the] highly industrialized city of Bombay in the neighbourhood, it is not uncommon for the visitors to Kanheri to feel a spiritual thrill in the freshness of the picturesque surroundings. This should have been all the more so in ancient times, when thick green forests studded the countryside around. It is not without reason that this place has [a] good number of open benches cut in the rock, and that almost all the caves have benches in their verandah or front court. One can realise easily the purpose of these simple pieces of architectural work by spending a little time there; it is refreshing with the evening breezes from the sea; the individual sitting there feels his infinitesimal self dissolving itself into the infinite nature around, an inexplicable experience highly spiritual and elevating.[57]

Effusive to be sure, and not a little romantic whatever the sense of that term, and yet these remarks must stand as evidence of the aesthetic impact of a Buddhist monastic site on a well-educated, modern Indian archeologist who had spent a good deal of time there, and it was this same site that prompted Meister to say: "The humane and simple qualities of these retreats can hardly be sensed without being present at the site. Sanely and with forethought caves with various functions have been integrated into a natural landscape, making the whole something more than any of its parts."[58] In fact, Nagaraju's remarks might even be taken as a kind of ethno-archeological evidence demonstrating if not the continuing use, at least the continuing effect of these sites on a local indigenous population: he, even as a modern outsider, clearly experienced something at this monastery which "stole his heart and eye," and that of course is exactly how the redactors of our monastic codes described such places.

It remains obvious, however, that much of what Nagaraju says does not lend itself to comfortable analysis or argument, but his reference to "benches"—"these simple pieces of architectural work"—might a little more so. Meister too noted that "there are, throughout this complex, public benches";[59] Nagaraju's inventory is more specific; under his number 59a Nagaraju says, "On the scarp face between Cave 59 and the next 60, a long bench is cut. The place for the bench has been well-selected; a beautiful view, of the plain ground down the hill and the sea and the Bassein Creek beyond, can be had from this place." Under number 67 he notes, "There are long benches cut along either of the side walls of the open court from which one can enjoy a panoramic view of the Salsette Coast and the sea beyond." And Dhavalikar too said much the same thing in regard to Kanheri 97, "It has a large fore-court with a long bench on either side from where one can enjoy the scenic beauty of the coast."[60] But even these more specific observations already had a long previous history: West had already noted this bench "commanding a fine view" in 1862, as had Burgess in 1883—"a long stone bench, forming a pleasant seat in the evenings, with a magnificent view over Salsette to the westward, with the sea along the horizon."[61]

These benches—simple but intentional constructions—are, moreover, by no means limited to Kanheri, but have also been noted at a number of the Western Cave sites. In the

57. S. Nagaraju, *Buddhist Architecture of Western India (c. 250 B.C.–c. A.D. 300)* (Delhi, 1981), 200–221.

58. M. W. Meister, "Sub-urban Planning and Rock-cut Architecture in India," in *Madhu: Recent Researches in Indian Archaeology and Art History. Shri M. N. Deshpande Festschrift*, ed. M. S. Nagaraja Rao (Delhi, 1981), 162.

59. Meister, "Sub-urban Planning," 162.

60. Nagaraju, *Buddhist Architecture*, 206, 208; Dhavalikar, *Late Hinayana Caves*, 60.

61. E. W. West, "Description of Some of the Kanheri Topes," *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 6 (1862): 117; J. Burgess, *Report on the Buddhist Cave Temples and Their Inscriptions* (Archaeological Survey of Western India, vol. 4) (London, 1883), 65.

Bhimashankar Group of caves at Junnar, for example, "a bench, now ruined, which provided a beautiful vista of the large flat land in the foreground and the hills beyond" has been noted; and numbers 32 and 33 of the Ambika Group at the same site have been described as "at a high level and from this a very fine panoramic view of the city and the hills beyond can be had." As Nagaraju has noted, Bhagavanlal Indraji had suggested already in 1885 "that these excavations were meant only as view seats,"[62] and, indeed, it is hard to imagine what else they and the numerous other benches at Buddhist monastic sites could have been meant for. They were obviously intentionally built or cut and yet have no clearly discernible utilitarian purpose. They are often awkwardly located on high ledges away from what appears to have been the normal flow of traffic. They appear not to have been scattered haphazardly around a site, but to have been strategically placed to direct their user's gaze towards "a beautiful view," "a panoramic view," "a magnificent view" of the local natural landscape. Like the Indian garden they would appear to present a framed, directed, and manipulated view of nature. They look in fact very much like the elevated seats in the Indian garden that were meant to furnish places "to sit, rest, and view the surrounding landscape." And they may even be referred to in the description of the ideal beautiful monastery in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*.

The Mūlasarvāstivādin description of the ideal beautiful monastery has already been quoted, but one element of it might repay further discussion. The first part of the long compound that comes at the head of the description of the beautiful *vihāra* is *udgatamañcapīṭha*, and there is some ambiguity here. Typically in *vinaya* literature *mañca* would seem to mean 'bed' or 'couch', and *pīṭha* 'seat' or 'stool', but all the other members of this long compound refer to architectural components—"railings, latticed windows, round windows, and flights of stairs"—so that "couches" and "seats" would not seem to fit well here.[63] Then there is the problem that *mañca-pīṭha* are here specifically described as *udgata* 'raised' or 'high', and this makes the fit even more awkward since, as anyone familiar with Buddhist monastic rules will know, both the basic *sikṣāpada* rules and specific rules of the *Prātimokṣa* make it an offense for monks and novices to use high couches or seats.[64] To describe the ideal monastery as having couches and seats which their inhabitants could not use seems therefore distinctly odd. If, however, *udgatamañcapīṭha* here in fact refers to "raised benches on platforms," then we would have not only a reference to an element of the Indian garden, but a reasonably close description of what has been found at a number of actual monasteries in India. There is, in short, much that would favor the latter possibility.

Other aspects of what has been said above about both the siting of monasteries and their benches are, however, not so amenable to discussion. The view from both has been said to be "fine," "beautiful" or "magnificent," but it is, again, not easy to assess these observations, or to determine whose notions of natural beauty are being reflected, and here texts offer very little aid. Passages dealing with panoramic views of a natural landscape are, to my knowledge, rare in Indian monastic literature. In the *Cīvaravastu* the view from Mt. Vaidehaka of the fields below is certainly described in terms that can express beauty. When the Buddha and Ānanda look down from atop Mt. Vaidehaka, the text says they saw

62. Nagaraju, *Buddhist Architecture*, 145, 149

63. For typical *Vinaya* usages see, for example, C. S. Upasak, *Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic Terms (Based on Pali Literature)* (Varanasi, 1975), 163, 178.

64. For the sake of convenience see M. Wijayaratna, *Buddhist Monastic Life: According to the Texts of the Theravāda Tradition*, tr. C. Grangier and S. Collins (Cambridge, 1990), 25; W. Pruitt and K. R. Norman, *The Pātimokkha* (Sacred Books of the Buddhists, vol. 49) (Oxford, 2003), 80–81; A. C. Banerjee, *Two Buddhist Vinaya Texts in Sanskrit: Prātimokṣa Sūtra and Bhikṣukarmavākya* (Calcutta, 1977), 44.

"level fields and level environs adorned with rows, particularly lovely in their divisions in arrangement" (*kṣetrāṇi samāni samopavicārāṇy āvalīvinibaddhāni bhaktiracanāviśeṣa-vicitrāṇi*), and this prompted the Buddha to rule that monastic robes should be made on this pattern.[65] There are also other passages which amply demonstrate that the redactors of our *vinaya* were concerned that a wide range of things—robes, processions, *stūpas*, and, of course, *vihāras*—should be beautiful (*śobhana, mdzes pa*),[66] but, again, this is not, to my knowledge, ever directly said of the "view" from a monastery, and we do not actually or directly know what "a beautiful view" would have consisted of for the redactors of our texts, who were probably not, in any case, the builders of the actual monasteries that we know. The aesthetic values of the monks who had Satdhāra or Nal or Kanheri built can only be known or inferred from what is observable at the sites themselves; they can only be judged by their products.[67] But one of the things that has been repeatedly observed about such sites is that they have been located—the usual words are "chosen" or "selected"—such that the visitor to them is confronted with or directed towards a particular view of the local natural landscape that moderns find "beautiful" or "fine" or "magnificent." This has not been observed at just one site, but at a wide range of different kinds of sites in various parts of the sub-continent—it appears to be something of a constant. This has also not been observed by just one person, or at one period in the history of the exploration of these sites. Agents and authors of colonialism like Cunningham and Stein observed this, but so too did modern trained Indian archeologists like Dhavalikar and Nagaraju. Such observations were made very early on by Cunningham and West, but they were also made—sometimes more expansively—much more recently; indeed as recently as 2002 A. K. Singh was still referring to "the picturesque surroundings" of the newly discovered Buddhist monastic complex near Chunari in Central India.[68] Both the diversity of observers and the span of time during which such observations have been made make it all but impossible to see them simply as the result of the picturesque movement that was a part of the colonial gaze. Something else must also be involved. The benches found emphasize even more specifically the issue of siting and view. They must have been intentionally constructed and located; they were not necessary and served no utilitarian purpose. Since they clearly frame or focus their users' line of sight on a particular view, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that that view was valued and thought worthy of being permanently fixed by "those old Buddhist monks" who had these benches made or added, and that these monks had a fondness for framed natural beauty that could not have differed too much from that of the modern gaze. In fact there may be one little piece of inscriptional evidence to support this.

Cave 99 at Kanheri is "a very small cave with a cell and a verandah . . . There is a bench cut along either side wall of the open court." Nagaraju says of it: "An excellent view of the Arabian Sea and the Bassein Creek could be had from this"; Dhavalikar, more simply,

65. *Cīvaravastu*, GMs iii 2, 50.6.

66. See Schopen, *Buddhist Monks*, 34–35 and n. 70; G. Schopen, *Figments and Fragments of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India* (Honolulu, 2005) 134; G. Schopen, "Taking the Bodhisattva into Town: More Texts on the Image of 'the Bodhisattva' and Image Processions in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*," *East and West* 55 (2005): 306ff.

67. For the meanings of landscape and the problems in getting at them, see C. Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments* (Oxford, 1994) and the discussion of Tilley in T. Insoll, *Archaeology, Ritual, Religion* (London, 2004), 85–92. For the aesthetics of landscape see, for example, A. Carlson, *Aesthetics and the Environment: The Appreciation of Nature, Art and Architecture* (London, 2000); *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments*, ed. A. Carlson and A. Berleant (Peterborough, 2004); *Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts*, ed. S. Kemal and I. Gaskell (Cambridge, 1995).

68. A. K. Singh, "A Shaiva Monastic Complex of the Kalacuris at Chunari in Central India," *South Asian Studies* 18 (2002): 47.

"The court has a bench overlooking the sea."[69] An establishment in such a location in coastal California—however humble, whether cottage or motel—would, of course, have a sign on it calling it "Sea View," and, oddly enough, that may be just what we find on this monastic excavation. On the back wall of the open verandah (an English word, by the way, of Indian origin) the following inscription occurs:

Sidhaṃ therānaṃ bhayata-mītabhūtīnaṃ
lenaṃ sāgara-paloganānaṃ (or *-paloganaṃ*) *deyadhamaṃ*

Without noting the difficulties with the text, Nagaraju paraphrases the inscription by saying that it "records that this cave was a gift by a monk, Mitabhūti," and that in the inscription "the cave is rightly called 'Sea-View'."[70] This interpretation is a widely held one, and although others have been less certain,[71] it is not impossible that the Prakrit *-palogana* of this record—if that is in fact the intended reading—could be equivalent to Sanskrit *-pralokana*, and that a reasonable, though not absolutely certain, translation would be:

Success. A monastic cell viewing the sea—the religious gift of the Elder, the Reverend Mītabhūti.

If "viewing the sea" be taken here as characterizing the *leṇa* by, in effect, describing its function—and this too might not be unreasonable—then we would have here what is probably as close as we will get to an explicit statement of the non-utilitarian, aesthetic purposes of such constructions at Buddhist monastic sites in India.

We might end here with two final considerations that involve both the Indian garden and the siting of Buddhist monasteries, the first of which directs us toward an obvious truism: different types of sources tell us different things. Monastic literary sources make it very clear that their redactors were fully aware of the aesthetic and erotic values of the Indian garden and that they still, in a variety of ways, wanted to assimilate their monasteries to them. They also tell us that the assimilation was to the garden, not to the *āśrama*, which could have seemed to have been a more obvious choice, but which is a term that appears to be carefully avoided in their descriptions or discussions of their monasteries. Given the bad state of preservation of actual Buddhist monasteries and the lack of identifiable contemporary gardens, little if any of this would have been available from the archaeological record.

In regard to the characteristic siting of Buddhist monasteries, however, the situation is reversed. What little is said in the literary sources about the siting of *vihāra*s is either vague or not germane—the site is to be "neither too far nor too near" a town or settlement, a place "that is little crowded by day and there is little commotion, that by night has few sounds and little noise, and one is bothered little by insects, mosquitoes, wind, heat, and crawling things"[72]—or is negative and only describes what makes a site unsuitable for a *vihāra*: it

69. Nagaraju, *Buddhist Architecture*, 215–16; Dhavalikar, *Late Hinayana Caves*, 64.

70. Nagaraju, *Buddhist Architecture*, 216, 336 no. 40.

71. Dhavalikar, *Late Hinayana Caves*, 64; S. Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India: Their History and Their Contribution to Indian Culture* (London, 1962), 152; Meister, "Sub-urban Planning," 164 n. 10. Bühler (in Burgess, *Report on the Elura Cave Temples*, 83–84) notes the difficulties with the reading and interpretation, and uncertainty is also indicated in H. Lüders, *A List of Brahmi Inscriptions from the Earliest Times to about A.D. 400 with the Exception of Those of Asoka* (Appendix to *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 10) (Calcutta, 1912), 106, no. 1012. M. A. Mehendale, however, appears to accept the reading *-palogana* and the equivalence of it with Sanskrit *-pralokana* (*Historical Grammar of Inscriptional Prakrits* [Poona, 1948], 61, §171 (i); 80, §185 (viii)).

72. See above p. 494 where part of this stencilled passage on the ideal location for a *vihāra* is cited and translated. For the full form in Sanskrit see *Śayanāsanavastu* (Gnoli) 18.35 and its translation at Schopen, "Hierarchy and Housing," 117.

is unsuitable if it is a dwelling place for snakes, scorpions, etc.; if the land belongs to a king or shrine or householder, etc.; if it borders on a river, well, road, or pit.[73] There is no requirement that it have a view of any kind. The fact that so many actual Buddhist monasteries not only had views, but views that struck a hundred and fifty years of modern observers as "beautiful" or "magnificent" could, then, only be known from the archeological record. Indeed, the absence in the texts of any requirement regarding view gives real meaning to the words "chosen" or "selected" found so often in the description of actual Buddhist monastic sites: a location or orientation that framed a given view was not required. It is, of course, true—as was suggested to me some years ago by my friend Gérard Fussman—that the location of many monastic sites on hills might well have had a practical, even economic reason: such locations might have been wasteland not needed or used for agricultural production and therefore have been readily available. But this would not account for the orientation of the constructions or excavations, or the placement of the benches, both of which exploited a given view: these, it would seem, were choices.

Very lastly there is the nature of the nature that would be encountered at the ideal *vihāra* and at the situated monastery.[74] That the Indian garden was—in spite of its trees and flowers and birdsong—a long way from natural does not seem in doubt. Such places—again in Ali's words—were "carefully constructed and highly supplemented" or "manipulated" spaces; "they were not perceived as 'wild,' 'untamed' or 'pristine nature'." The nature encountered here was not natural, and since one is assimilated to the other by Buddhist authors, what holds for the garden must hold for the ideal Indian *vihāra* as well—here nature, ideally, would have been tamed, trimmed, and manicured, and its unwanted natural elements elided. A certain distance from the wild would have been assured. But the situated monastery would have even more literally presented nature at a distance. Here nature would not have been a force to be encountered, but it would have been presented—rather like a landscape painting—as a carefully framed, distant object of view. Here too is nature at arm's length, and that is probably because that is where monastic builders, like monastic authors, wanted it: visible, but at a comfortable distance.

73. *Vibhaṅga*, Derge, 'dul ba CA 249b.6ff.

74. Ali ("Gardens," 222) observes "that gardens, as man-made places, were necessarily invested with cultural meanings. Gardens therefore provide an excellent occasion to explore the social meaning of the natural world among élites in early India." Much the same would seem to hold for what the Buddhist material discussed here can tell us about "the social meanings of the natural world" among the elite monks who created monasteries.